

**DISTRICT OF  
COLUMBIA  
MUNICIPAL  
REGULATIONS  
for  
OPTOMETRY**

## CHAPTER 64      OPTOMETRY

Secs.

6400	General Provisions
6401	Term of License
6402	Educational Requirements
6403	Applicants Educated in Foreign Countries
6404	National Examination
6405	District Examination
6406	Continuing Education Requirements
6407	Approved Continuing Education Programs and Activities
6408	Continuing Education Credits
6409-6410	<b>[RESERVED]</b>
6411	Practice of Optometry by Students
6412	Administration of Diagnostic Pharmaceutical Agents
6499	Definitions

### 6400      GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 6400.1      This chapter applies to applicants for and holders of a license to practice optometry.
- 6400.2      Chapters 40 (Health Occupations: General Rules), and 41 (Health Occupations: Administrative Procedures) of this title supplement this chapter.
- 6400.3      Only the following persons may practice optometry in the District:
- (a) An optometrist;
  - (b) An ophthalmologist; or
  - (c) A student practicing under the supervision of an optometrist or ophthalmologist in accordance with § 6411.

### 6401      TERM OF LICENSE

- 6401.1      Subject to § 6401.2, a license issued pursuant to this chapter shall expire at 12:00 midnight of March 31<sup>st</sup> of each even-numbered year.
- 6401.2      If the Director changes the renewal system pursuant to § 4006.3 of Chapter 40 of this title, a licensed issued pursuant to this chapter shall expire at 12:00 midnight of the last day of the month of the birthdate of the holder of the license, or other date established by the Director.

**6402 EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

- 6402.1 Except as otherwise provided in this subtitle, an applicant for a license shall furnish proof satisfactory to the Board that the applicant has received a doctoral degree in optometry based upon completion of a program which was accredited at the time the degree was conferred by the Council on Optometric Education of the American Optometric Association in accordance with § 504(h) of the Act, D.C. Official Code § 3-1205.04(h).
- 6402.2 An applicant for a license shall submit with a completed application a certified transcript of the applicant's educational record and certificate of graduation.

**6403 APPLICANTS EDUCATED IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES**

- 6403.1 The Board may grant a license to practice optometry to an applicant who completed an educational program in an educational institution in a foreign country which program is not accredited by the Council on Optometric Education of the American Optometric Association if the applicant:
- (a) Meets all requirements of this chapter except for § 6402.1; and
  - (b) Demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Board that the applicant's education and training are substantially equivalent to the requirements of this subtitle and the Act in ensuring that the applicant is qualified to practice optometry by submitting the documentation required by § 6403.2.
- 6403.2 An applicant under this section shall, in lieu of meeting the requirements of § 6402.1, submit with the application a certification from a private education evaluation service approved by the Board that the applicant's foreign education is substantially equivalent to the education provided in an accredited program.
- 6403.3 The Board may interview an applicant under this section to determine whether the applicant's education or training meets the requirements of the Act and this chapter.
- 6403.4 If a document required by this chapter is in a language other than English, an applicant shall arrange for its translation into English by a translation service acceptable to the Board and shall submit a translation signed by the translator attesting to its accuracy.

**6404 NATIONAL EXAMINATION**

- 6404.1 To qualify for a license by examination, an applicant shall receive a passing score on the examination administered by the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (the national examination).
- 6404.2 An applicant who has passed an examination specified in § 6404.1 more than five (5) years prior to the application date, but who does not qualify for a license by reciprocity, shall not be required to retake the examination if the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Board that the applicant has been continuously licensed and practicing as an optometrist in the United States since the date the applicant passed the examination.
- 6404.3 An applicant shall submit to the Board with a completed application the applicant's examination results, certified by the National Board of Examiners in Optometry.
- 6404.4 The passing score on the national examination shall be the passing score set by the National Board of Examiners in Optometry on each test that forms a part of the examination.

**6405 DISTRICT EXAMINATION**

- 6405.1 Prior to June 1, 1994 in order to qualify for a license under this chapter, an applicant shall receive a passing score, as determined by the Board, on a practical examination developed by the Board (the District examination) or the national examination including a practical examination portion.
- 6405.2 The Board shall administer the District examination at least two (2) times a year.
- 6405.3 An applicant shall not be eligible to take the District examination until the applicant meets all other requirements for a license.
- 6405.4 The District examination shall consist of a demonstration by the applicant of competency in the practice of optometry.
- 6405.5 Effective June 1, 1994, the Board will no longer administer the District examination. Instead applicants shall comply with the requirements of subsection 6404.5. However, until that time applicants will have the option of sitting for the District practical examination separately or the national examination that includes

a practical examination portion.

## **6406 CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

- 6406.1 Subject to § 6406.2, this section shall apply to applicants for the renewal, reactivation, or reinstatement of a license for a term expiring March 31, 1992 and for subsequent terms.
- 6406.2 This section shall not apply to applicants for an initial license by examination, reciprocity, or endorsement, nor does it apply to applicants for the first renewal of a license granted by examination.
- 6406.3 A continuing education credit shall be valid only if it is part of a program or activity approved by the Board in accordance with § 6407.
- 6406.4 An applicant for renewal of a license shall limit proof of having completed twenty-four (24) hours of approved continuing education credit during the two (2) year period preceding the date the license expires.
- 6406.5 To qualify for a license, a person in inactive status within the meaning of § 511 of the Act, D.C. Official Code § 3-1205.11 (1985), who submits an application to reactivate a license shall submit proof of having completed twelve (12) hours of approved continuing education credit for each year after March 31, 1990 that the applicant was in inactive status.
- 6406.6 To qualify for a license, an applicant for reinstatement of a license shall submit proof of having completed twelve (12) hours of approved continuing education credit for each year after March 31, 1990 that the applicant was not licensed.
- 6406.7 An applicant under this section shall prove completion of required continuing education credits by submitting with the application the following information with respect to each program:
- (a) The name and address of the sponsor of the program;
  - (b) The name of the program, its location, a description of the subject matter covered, and the names of the instructors;
  - (c) The dates on which the applicant attended the program;
  - (d) The hours of credit claimed; and
  - (e) Verification by the sponsor of completion, by signature or stamp.

- 6406.8 An applicant under this section shall prove completion of continuing education course work that was audited under § 6408.3 by submitting with the application a signed statement from the instructor on college stationery for each class attended.
- 6406.9 An applicant for renewal of a license who fails to submit proof of having completed continuing education requirements by the date the license expires may renew the license up to sixty (60) days after expiration by submitting this proof and paying the required late fee.
- 6406.10 Upon submitting this proof and paying the late fee, the applicant is deemed to have possessed a valid license during the period between the expiration of the license and the submission of the required documentation and payment of the late fee.
- 6406.11 If an applicant for renewal of a license fails to submit proof of completion of continuing education requirements or pay the late fee within sixty (60) days after the expiration of applicant's license, the license shall be considered to have lapsed on the date of expiration.
- 6406.12 The Board, in its discretion, may grant an extension of the sixty (60) day period to renew after expiration if the applicant's failure to submit proof of completion was for good cause.

**6407 APPROVED CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES**

- 6407.1 The Board, in its discretion, may approve continuing education programs and activities that contribute to the growth of an applicant in professional competence to practice of optometry and which meet the other requirements of this section.
- 6407.2 The Board may approve the following types of continuing education programs, if the program meets the requirements of § 6407.3:
- (a) An undergraduate or graduate course given at an accredited college or university;
  - (b) A seminar or workshop;
  - (c) An educational program given at a conference;
  - (d) In-service training; and
  - (e) A correspondence course.
- 6407.3 To qualify for approval by the Board, a continuing education program shall:

- (a) Be current in its subject matter;
- (b) Be developed and taught by qualified individuals; and
- (c) Meet one of the following requirements:
  - (1) Be administered or approved by a recognized optometry organization;
  - (2) Be taught as part of an accredited program under § 6402.1; or
  - (3) Be submitted by the program sponsors to the Board for review no less than sixty (60) days prior to the date of the presentation and be approved by the Board.

6407.4 The Board may issue and update a list of approved continuing education programs.

6407.5 An applicant shall have the burden of verifying whether a program is approved by the Board pursuant to this section prior to attending the program.

6407.6 The Board may approve the following continuing education activities:

- (a) Serving as an instructor or speaker at a conference, seminar, workshop, or in-service training; and
- (b) Publishing a book or a chapter in a book, or publishing a book review, article or abstract in a professional journal or bulletin.

## **6408 CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDIT**

6408.1 The Board may grant continuing education credit for whole hours only, with a minimum of fifty (50) minutes constituting one (1) credit hour.

6408.2 The Board may grant a maximum of two (2) continuing education credits per year for attending programs under § 6407.2 or completing activities under § 6407.6 determined by the Board to be in practice management.

6408.3 The Board may grant fifteen (15) hours of continuing education credit for each semester hour and ten (10) hours of continuing education credit for each quarter hour for undergraduate or graduate courses under § 6407.2(a).

6408.4 The Board may grant a maximum of five (5) continuing education credits per year to an applicant for attending in-service education programs under § 6407.2(d).

- 6408.5 The Board may grant a maximum of twenty-five percent (25%) of the applicant's continuing education requirement for taking correspondence courses under § 6407.2(e).
- 6408.6 The Board may grant a maximum of fifty percent (50%) of an applicant's continuing education requirement for completing continuing education activities under § 6407.6.
- 6408.7 The Board may grant an applicant who serves as an instructor or speaker under § 6407.6(a) credit for preparation and presentation time, subject to the following restrictions:
- (a) The maximum amount of credit that may be granted for preparation time is twice the amount of the associated presentation time;
  - (b) If an applicant has previously received credit in connection with a particular presentation, the Board shall not grant credit for a subsequent presentation unless it involves either a different subject or substantial additional research concerning the same subject; and
  - (c) The presentation shall have been completed during the period for which credit is claimed.
- 6408.8 The Board may grant continuing education credit for publications under § 6407.6(b) only if the applicant proves to the satisfaction of the Board that the work has been published or accepted for publication during the period for which credit is claimed.
- 6408.9 The Board may not grant continuing education for programs or activities designed to promote specific instruments or other products of profit-making entities.

**6409-6410 [RESERVED]**

**6411 PRACTICE OF OPTOMETRY BY STUDENTS**

- 6411.1 A student may perform actions which require a license as an optometrist only in accordance with the Act and this chapter.
- 6411.2 Only a student fulfilling the education requirements under § 103(c) of the Act, D.C. Official Code § 3-1201.03 and § 6402 shall be authorized to practice under this section.
- 6411.3 Only an optometrist or ophthalmologist may supervise practice by students under this section.



- 6411.4 A student may practice only under the general or immediate supervision of an optometrist or ophthalmologist who is available in person on the premises, but who need not be physically present in the room at the time the student practices.
- 6411.5 For at least ten percent (10%) of supervised practice during any one (1) month period, a supervising optometrist or ophthalmologist shall be physically with the student and either discussing or observing the student's practice.
- 6411.6 A supervising optometrist or ophthalmologist shall review a student's optometric examination findings before a patient leaves the office.
- 6411.7 A student shall see patients on a randomly selected basis without bias toward a particular type of patient care, such as Medicare, Medicaid, or union contract.
- 6411.8 A student shall identify himself or herself as a student before performing actions of an optometrist.
- 6411.9 A supervising optometrist or ophthalmologist shall sign all prescriptions for eyeglasses or contact lenses.
- 6411.10 A supervising optometrist or ophthalmologist is fully responsible for all supervised practice by a student during the period of supervision, and is subject to disciplinary action for any violation of the Act or this chapter by the student.
- 6411.11 A student shall not receive compensation of any nature, directly or indirectly, from a patient, except for a salary based on hours worked in the training program.
- 6411.12 A student shall be subject to all of the applicable provisions of the Act and this subtitle. The Board may deny an application for a license by, or take other disciplinary action against, a student who is found to have violated the Act or this subtitle, in accordance with Chapter 41 of this title.
- 6411.13 If the Board finds that a student has violated the Act of this subtitle, the Board may, in addition to any other disciplinary actions permitted by the Act, revoke, suspend, or restrict the privilege of the student to practice.

## **6412 ADMINISTRATION OF DIAGNOSTIC PHARMACEUTICAL AGENTS**

- 6412.1 For purposes of this section, "diagnostic pharmaceutical agent" means any pharmaceutical agent used in the diagnosis of ocular disease and conditions of the visual system.
- 6412.2 Only an optometrist certified in accordance with this section or a physician may administer a diagnostic pharmaceutical agent.

6412.3 An applicant for certification to administer diagnostic pharmaceutical agents shall do the following:

- (a) Submit a completed, notarized application; and
- (b) Demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Board that he or she:
  - (1) Has either applied for licensure under this chapter as an optometrist, or has been issued a license under this chapter as an optometrist;
  - (2) Has completed a course approved by the Board in general and ocular pharmacology that meets the requirements of § 207 of the Act, D.C. Code § 2-3302.7, and has arranged for the institution to submit a transcript directly to the Board; and
  - (3) Has passed the treatment and management of ocular disease (TMOD) section of the examination administered by the National Board of Examiners in Optometry, or any other examination approved by the National Board of Examiners in Optometry or the Board, and has arranged for the test results to be submitted directly to the Board.

6412.4 A course approved by the Board shall be any course in the treatment and management of ocular disease offered or approved by an institution with an accredited program.

6412.5 An optometrist authorized under this section to administer a diagnostic pharmaceutical agent shall not do the following:

- (a) Administer a diagnostic pharmaceutical agent by any means other than topical application to the eye;
- (b) Administer a diagnostic pharmaceutical agent when the medical condition of the patient contraindicates such use; or
- (c) Administer any pharmaceutical agent for therapeutic purposes unless authorized in accordance with the provisions of section 6413 of this chapter.

## **6413 ADMINISTRATION OF THERAPEUTIC PHARMACEUTICAL AGENTS**

- 6413.1 As used in this section, the term "therapeutic pharmaceutical agents" means appropriate topical drugs and oral systemic drugs, including antibiotics, appropriate analgesics, antihistamines, non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, and anti-glaucoma medications. The term "therapeutic pharmaceutical agents" includes topical steroidal anti-inflammatories and antivirals, or oral medications for the emergency treatment of angle closure glaucoma. The term "therapeutic pharmaceutical agents" does not include oral and injectable antiviral and antifungal agents and other oral and injectable agents not authorized in this section, except for an injectable to counter an anaphylactic reaction.
- 6413.2 Only an optometrist certified pursuant to this section may administer therapeutic pharmaceutical agents.
- 6413.3 An applicant for certification to administer therapeutic pharmaceutical agents shall do the following:
- (a) Submit a completed, notarized application and pay the fee provided in Chapter 35 of this title; and
  - (b) Demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Board that he or she:
    - (1) Has either applied for licensure under this chapter as an optometrist, or has been issued a license under this chapter as an optometrist;
    - (2) If a graduate of an accredited school of optometry prior to July 1, 1992, has completed a Board approved course consisting of a minimum of one hundred (100) clock hours in general and ocular pharmacology which meets the requirements of § 207 of the Act, D.C. Code § 2-3302.7, and has arranged for the institution to transmit a transcript of the courses taken directly to the Board; and
    - (3) Has passed the treatment and management of ocular disease (TMOD) section of the examination administered by the National Board of Examiners in Optometry, or any other examination approved by the National Board of Examiners in Optometry or the Board, has arranged for the test results to be submitted directly to the Board.

- 6413.4 A course approved by the Board shall be any course in the treatment and management of ocular disease offered or approved by an accredited school of optometry.
- 6413.5 An optometrist certified pursuant to this section shall not administer a therapeutic pharmaceutical agent when the medical condition of the patient contraindicates such use.
- 6413.6 Prior to initiating treatment for glaucoma, an optometrist shall consult with the patient's physician or other appropriate health professional. The treatment of angle closure glaucoma shall be limited to the initiation of immediate emergency treatment.
- 6413.7 An optometrist certified for the administration of therapeutic pharmaceutical agents shall prove to the Board's satisfaction that he or she has completed six (6) hours of approved continuing education credits pursuant to section 6408, in addition to the approved continuing education credit required under subsection 6406.4.

## **6499 DEFINITIONS**

- 6499.1 As used in this chapter, the following terms have the meanings ascribed:

**Applicant** – a person applying for license to practice optometry under this chapter.

**Board** – the Board of Optometry, established by § 207 of the Act, D.C. Official Code § 3-1202.07 (2001).

**Ophthalmologist** – a physician specializing in ophthalmology.

**Optometrist** – a person licensed to practice optometry under the Act.

**Physician** - a person licensed to practice medicine under the Act.

- 6499.2 The definitions in § 4099 of Chapter 40 of this title are incorporated by reference into and are applicable to this chapter.